

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

EA Title and Number: #OR-054-01-011
Title: Herb Asher Guzzler

Serial Number of Project Number: 735146
Bureau of Land Management(BLM)Office: Prineville District Office
Resource Area: Central Oregon
Resource Area/Geographic Area: Central Oregon Resource Area
Upper John Day Geographic Team

The proposed project is located approximately 12 miles northwest of Dayville, Oregon.

Legal Description: T11S R26E S5 NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$

I. Purpose and Need for Proposed Action

A water source is needed in the area to provide water for livestock and wildlife and improve livestock distribution. Currently there is no water source in the uplands of this pasture. Livestock and wildlife distribution is poor which is causing alteration of the vegetative composition toward dominance of annuals and degradation of native grasses.

This proposed action is subject to and in conformance with the following land use plan:

Name of Plan: Two Rivers Resource Management Plan(RMP) and subsequent updates.

Date approved: June 1986

II. Proposed Action and Alternatives

Proposed Action

The current lessee James Barker would provide the labor, equipment and materials for the construction of this guzzler. Construction of this guzzler would be supervised by the Bureau of Land Management and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Access to the proposed guzzler construction site would be by traveling from Cathedral

Rock Ranch on Highway 19, northeast onto a private road which runs through Barkers barnlot and up into section 5 in the Herb Asher Allotment boundary as shown on attached map.

A water collection area measuring approximately 60 feet wide, 60 feet long, and 4 feet deep with down slope grade of 3% to 5% and storage capacity of 75,000 gallons would be constructed using a D-6 caterpillar and a Case 580 backhoe. This would be the only equipment operating in construction of the guzzler. The top northeast area of the pond would be lined with (3) 20 feet by 60 feet strips of 6 milometer black polyester liner and the lower area of the pond would be lined with 24 milometer polyester liner measuring 46 feet by 60 feet. A stand pipe would be installed approximately 10 feet from the outside edge of the lower end of the pond and into the pond. Water collected in the pond would run into the stand pipe and be piped to a water trough outside of the fenced collection area. An 8 foot mesh wire with top strand of smooth wire fence with a 12 foot gate would be constructed around the guzzler. Water from the guzzler would be available to wildlife year round.

No-Action

The proposed guzzler would not be constructed on public lands.

Other alternatives considered, but not carried forward would be drilling a well which is not considered an option considering the geology of the area. It is very unlikely that water would be found and it would be too expensive to drill. The area is not a suitable site for a reservoir and a pipeline from the John Day River would be too expensive.

III. Conformance with Applicable Land Use Plans

The proposed action is subject to and in compliance with the following land use plan:

Two Rivers Resource Management Plan(RMP)

Approved June 1986

Remarks: The Two Rivers RMP permits the installation of range improvements and the implementation of management systems which would result in coordinated livestock use. Long term benefits would be improvement in the rangeland resources and the enhancement of wildlife habitat.

This Environmental analysis, therefore, would consider actions that would affect and result in improvement of the natural resources on the Herb Asher Allotment and at the same time continue to provide the opportunity for livestock grazing on the Public Lands within the Herb Asher Allotment boundary.

IV. Existing Environment

Range:

The Herb Asher Allotment is located approximately 14 miles northwest of Dayville, Oregon, in Township 11 south, Range 26 east, Section 5.

The Public Lands in this allotment are located in T11S R26E, Sec. 6: N $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$; Sec. 5 N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$.

The northwest boundary of this allotment is adjacent to National Park Service Lands, John Day Fossil Beds National Monument. The exposure is a west-southwest facing slope covered with scattered western juniper, sagebrush, snakeweed, and perennial grasses and annual grasses/herbs.

The pasture where the proposed guzzler is located will be grazed by livestock no more than six weeks in the spring, April 15 to May 31, or occasionally in the winter, mid November to late December.

Livestock will not graze in this pasture both during the spring and winter each year. The permittee has also seeded several areas in the pasture on private land to increase the forage available for livestock and wildlife and improve distribution and utilization. Currently there is no water source in the uplands of this pasture. The area has a history of livestock grazing including sheep and cattle, which has altered the vegetative composition toward dominance of annuals-at least in portions of the immediate area.

Soils/Vegetation:

The soils of this site are classified as Simas, a very stony clay loam on 8 to 40 per cent slopes. Simas soils are well drained upland soils formed in loess and colluvium. The surface layer is very dark grayish brown and very stony clay loam about 5 inches thick. The upper 9 inches of the subsoil is dark brown clay, and the lower 13 inches is dark yellowish brown calcareous clay and gravelly clay. The substratum is dark yellowish brown, calcareous gravelly clay 33 inches or more thick. Permeability is slow, available water capacity is 6 to 9 inches, and the water supplying capacity is 8 to 12 inches. The effective rooting depth is 24 to 36 inches. Runoff is medium to rapid and the hazard of erosion is moderate to severe. This site faces west by southwest and probably experiences some of the south facing slope effects such as more severe temperature regimes. These clay soils may cause some difficulty in developing shallow excavations due to shrinking and swelling associated with these soils. Given the nature of this project, shrink and swell is not likely to be the limiting factor. Without lining the pond, it is unlikely that it would hold water.

Hydrology:

There are no known water sources in the immediate vicinity of this project, except for along McCarty Creek, which is $\frac{1}{4}$ mile to the north and across an existing fence. The mean precipitation from November 1 through May 1 is 6.12 inches (Dayville 1961-1990).

Wildlife:

The benefits to wildlife from the implementation of this project would be mostly to the resident Mule deer which use this area mainly as winter range. Approximately 200 feet to the north and across a fence from the project site there exists a small, bird-type guzzler. The proposed Herb Asher guzzler would benefit birds and small animals during the warmer summer months when the small, bird-type guzzler is dry. No special status animals are found, however, chukar, coyote, and bobcat have been sighted in the area.

Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals:

No special status plants are known from this area except for the population of *Carex hystericina* (porcupine sedge). *Carex hystericina* (porcupine sedge) is a species of wet areas, such as springs, seeps and along stream courses. It is presently listed as Threatened or Endangered in Oregon (List 2) by the Natural Heritage Data Base, and as such, is a BLM Assessment Species. This species is extremely susceptible to livestock grazing or any other type of continuous disturbance, although it appears to benefit from occasional disturbance which exposes bare soil and provides a new seedbed. This species is known to be located in McCarty Creek which is located approximately ¼ mile north of this project site.

Paleo/Cultural:

The specific area of the proposed project has been visited in the recent past and the terrain is judged to be of low potential for significant archaeological sites. There are no paleo resources at or in the immediate vicinity of the proposed project.

V. Impacts**Range:**

The stock water provided by this guzzler would allow better distribution and utilization of the available forage by livestock and wildlife.

The result of no-action would be that poor distribution and utilization by livestock and wildlife would continue and result in degradation of vegetative composition and soils.

Soils/Vegetation:

By developing the guzzler, the utilization of the available forage on the uplands in this pasture would improve due to better distribution of livestock and wildlife. Soil disturbance and vegetative removal would occur only in the area of the guzzler during construction. Disturbed areas around the construction site would be reseeded with native vegetation.

The result of no-action would be that the vegetative composition and soils would continue to degrade.

Hydrology:

The development of the guzzler would provide a water source for livestock and wildlife in the uplands of this pasture. No-action would result in livestock and wildlife continuing to impact the riparian areas of this pasture.

Wildlife:

The development of the guzzler would improve the wildlife habitat in the uplands of this pasture by attracting livestock away from the riparian areas along the John Day River to the west. The small animals and birds would benefit from the water provided by this guzzler. No-action would result in livestock and wildlife continuing to impact riparian areas.

Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals:

Special status plants and animals would not be impacted by the proposed action or no-action alternative.

Paleo/Cultural:

Neither cultural or paleontology resources would not be impacted by the proposed action or no-action alternative.

No Action Impacts:

The poor distribution and utilization by wildlife and livestock would continue and result in degradation of vegetative composition and soils.

Mitigation Measures and Residual Impacts:

Residual impacts would be the guzzler, fence around the guzzler and the trough at the site. No mitigation measures are recommended other than those described as part of the proposed action.

Cumulative Impacts:

Cumulative impacts would be improved utilization of the available forage and distribution by wildlife and livestock in the uplands within the pasture boundary.

VI. No Impact Items

1. Agricultural Lands (prime or Unique)
2. Air Quality
3. Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
4. Environmental Justice
5. Flood Plains
6. Invasive, Non-native species
7. Native American Religious Concerns
8. Paleontological Resources
9. Wastes (hazardous or solid)
10. Water Quality (surface or ground)
11. Wild and Scenic Rivers
12. Wilderness (including Wilderness Study Areas)

VII. Consultation and Coordination

Ken Primrose	BLM/Rangeland Management Specialist
John Morris	BLM/Fisheries Biologist
Gary Wing	BLM/Wildlife Biologist
Anna Smith	BLM/Hydrologist
Ron Halvorson	BLM/Botanist
John Zancanella	BLM/Archaeologist
James Barker	Private Landowner
James Hammett	NPS Superintendent

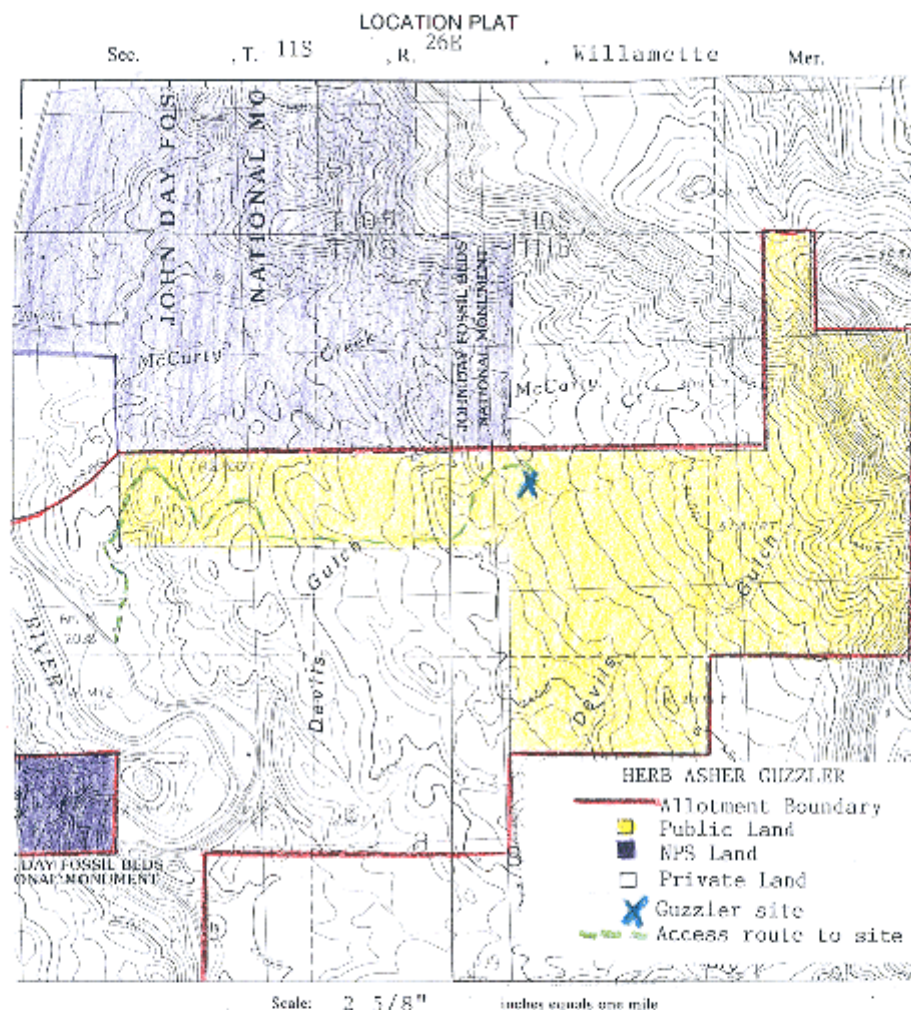
Prepared by: Colleen L. Wyllie, BLM Range Technician

2/27/01

NEPA requirements met:

/s/ Danny L. Tippy
Dan L. Tippy/Environmental Coordinator

03/09/01
Date



NOTICE

The Privacy Act of 1974 and the regulation in 43 CFR 2.49(d) provide that you be furnished the following information in connection with information required by this application.

AUTHORITY: 43 U.S.C. 315, 315a-e, 43 U.S.C. 301, 43 U.S.C. 1904.

PRINCIPAL PURPOSE: The information is to be used to authorize and document participation for construction, use and maintenance of range improvements.

ROUTINE USES: (1) Identify applicant's share or interest in an improvement placed on Public Lands; (2) Documentation for public information in support of notations made on land status records for the management, disposal, and use of public lands and resources; (3) Transfer to appropriate Federal agencies when consummation is required prior to granting a permit to use public lands; (4) Transfer to the U.S. Department of Justice in the event of litigation involving the records on the subject matter of the records; (5) Transfer, in the event there is indicated a violation or potential violation of a statute, regulation, rule, order, permit, lease, or agreement of either civil, criminal or regulatory nature, to the appropriate agency or agencies, whether Federal, State, local or foreign, charged with the responsibility of investigation or prosecuting such violation or charged with enforcing or implementing the statute, rule, regulation, order, permit, lease, or agreement violated or potentially violated.

EFFECT OF NOT PROVIDING INFORMATION: If you do not file this application and furnish the requested information, you will not be authorized to place improvements on the public lands. If the improvement is placed without proper authorization, you will be liable for damages and immediate removal of the facility.

The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1990 (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.) requires us to inform you that:

Information is being collected to develop a cooperative agreement on the construction, use, and maintenance of range improvements on its public lands.

Information will be used to document the specific participation of each cooperator on the range improvement(s) to be accomplished under the cooperative agreement. By signature, each cooperator agrees to participate in the manner specifically described in the agreement.

Response to this request is voluntary.

Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 10 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this form to U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, (Alternate) Bureau Clearance Officer, (WFO-771), 18 and C Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20240, and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (1004-0083), Washington, D.C. 20503.